

Message Text

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ORIGIN DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 /118 R

DRAFTED BY D/PW:FASIEVERTS:GM

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H:MR.KRIZEK

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P R 262044Z SEP 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

JRC NKP THAILAND

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, LA

SUBJECT: PW/MIA'S: LEAGUE OF FAMILIES VISIT TO VIENTIANE

1. LEADERSHIP OF NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA HAS ANNOUNCED PLAN FOR MASS "PILGRIMAGE" TO VIENTIANE IN OCTOBER TO CONDUCT "MERCY VIGIL" FOR INFORMATION ON AMERICAN CAPTURED/MISSING/DEAD. PLANS FOR TRIP HAVE BEEN MADE PUBLIC BY LEAGUE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SCOTT ALBRIGHT AND LEAGUE BOARD MEMBER GEORGE BROOKS, BOTH PARENTS OF MEN MISSING IN LAOS. JACK ANDERSON COLUMN SEPT. 26 QUOTES ALBRIGHT AS SAYING "A SHOW OF NUMBERS MAY PRODUCE SOME SHRED OF INFORMATION. WE HOPE TO FILL EVERY HOTEL ROOM IN VIENTIANE DURING THE TALKS." GROUP REPORTEDLY PLANS TO TIME VISIT TO COINCIDE WITH END

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OF 30-DAY PERIOD SPECIFIED IN SEPT. 14 PROTOCOL FOR FURNISHING NUMBERS AND NATIONALITY OF PW'S AND NAMES OF DIC'S,

I.E., ARRIVING VIENTIANE AROUND OCT. 10.

2. STATE AND DEFENSE OFFICERS HAVE TOLD LEAGUE LEADERSHIP THAT PROPOSED MASS VISIT TO VIENTIANE IS POOR IDEA UNLIKELY TO BRING RESULTS AND POSSIBLY SERIOUSLY COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. DEPTOFFS POINTED OUT PRISONER RELEASE AND MIA ACCOUNTING PROVISIONS OF PROTOCOL ARE TO COME DURING AND FOLLOWING 60-DAY PERIOD AFTER FORMATION OF COALITION, SO THAT VISIT DURING EARLIER PERIOD RUNS STRONG RISK OF TEMPORIZING RESPONSE FROM LPF TO EFFECT THAT INFO ON MIA'S ISN'T DUE UNTIL AFTER 60-DAY PERIOD. DEPTOFFS ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF LARGE GROUP IN VIENTIANE FOR SUCH A VISIT.

3. LEAGUE LEADERS NOW AIMING FOR FIFTY PW/MIA RELATIVES TO MAKE TRIP (DOWN FROM ORIGINALLY PROJECTED 150). DEPTOFF TRIED TO CONVINCE THEM TO SEND REPRESENTATIVE GROUP OF 4-6 PEOPLE FOR FIRST VISIT AT THIS TIME, LEAVING QUESTION OF LARGER GROUP FOR CONSIDERATION AT END OF 60-DAY PERIOD. WE POINTED OUT SMALL GROUP WOULD HAVE BETTER CHANCE OF ACTUALLY MEETING WITH PHOUMI VONGVICHIT OR OTHER LPF REP FOR SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF PW/MIA QUESTIONS, WHILE MASS VIGIL CONCEPT RISKS REBUFF WHICH COULD REVERSE APPARENT IMPROVEMENT OF PROSPECTS SIGNALLED BY PHOUMI'S PROMPT RESPONSE TO LEAGUE'S MESSAGE (VIENTIANE 6361 - NOTAL).

4. FYI, LEAGUE HAS ASKED REP. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN (R., N.Y.) TO JOIN GROUP. GILMAN TOLD DEPTOFF (SIEVERTS, D/PW) SEPT. 26 HE PROBABLY UNABLE TO GO IN OCTOBER BECAUSE OF CONGRESSIONAL CALENDER AND OTHER REASONS, BUT MIGHT VISIT VIENTIANE IN MID-DECEMBER, WHICH DEPTOFF INDICATED SHOULD BE END OF 60-DAY PERIOD REFERRED TO IN PROTOCOL. GILMAN IS BOARD MEMBER BROOKS' CONGRESSMAN AND HAS CORRESPONDED FREQUENTLY WITH DEPARTMENT ON BROOKS' BEHALF. END FYI.

5. FOREGOING IS FOR EMBASSY'S INFORMATION. WOULD APPRECIATE COMMENTS. RUSH

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